

Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Johnstown, NY

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 200 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Johnstown for a Brownfields Pilot. Johnstown (population approximately 9,000) is the seat of Fulton County and is surrounded by rural and low-income areas. The city and county were once known as the leather capital of the world when more than 5,300 area residents were employed in the industry. However, changes in technology, foreign competition, and associated environmental problems resulted in plant closures, job losses, and a depleted tax base. Today, 8 percent of the residents are unemployed and Fulton's poverty rate of 13 percent is the highest of any New York county.

The Pilot is targeting the former Karg Brothers Tannery, whose closure in 1993 resulted in about one quarter of the county's residents losing their jobs. The tannery was the largest of area operations and redevelopment of the 10-acre property is the cornerstone of the city's economic revitalization. The site, located on Cayadutta Creek, is known to contain storage tanks of solvents, acids, chromium compounds, dyes and pigments. Following assessment and cleanup, existing infrastructure will help spur redevelopment of the property.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Johnstown, New York

Date of Announcement:
March 1999

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets the 10-acre former Karg Brothers Tannery for redevelopment. The site is a cornerstone for the city's economic revitalization.

Contacts:

City of Johnstown
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Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 2
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Visit the EPA Region 2 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/r02earth/superfnd/brownfld/bfmainpg.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

OBJECTIVES

Johnstown's objective is to increase employment opportunities for area residents and raise the city's tax base by redeveloping the Karg Brothers Tannery site. Revitalization of the tannery will also provide public access to the property and to adjacent Cayadutta Creek. The city also plans to integrate a portion of the site with neighboring Schriver Pond Linear Park, and locate a bus depot for the local school district on another part of the property. The Pilot will assist the city's plans by conducting environmental investigations on the property and involving the community in the redevelopment process with a Citizen Participation Plan.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Performing an environmental assessment of the Karg Brothers Tannery site;
- Collecting soil samples from adjacent residential properties and testing water and sediment from Cayadutta Creek;
- Developing a Public Participation Plan and conducting community outreach meetings;
- Providing Pilot project information via the Internet; and
- Leveraging cleanup and redevelopment funding, including a \$200,000 goods and services commitment from the City of Johnstown.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.